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On the basis of previous research, which revealed difference in self-perception of disadvantaged and advantaged children, this project investigated whether differences in personality traits existed and what these differences might be as revealed by their self-perceptions. Fourth through eighth graders in an urban school system were subjects. About 200 subjects were disadvantaged, and about 300 subjects were from an advantaged area of the same city. Forty bipolar traits were expressed in sentence form, and children rated themselves on the inventory, indicating their self-concepts. Results showed higher percentages on the positive personality traits for the disadvantaged and revealed greater differences between boys than between girls. The disadvantaged, more than the advantaged, tended to see themselves as independent, competent, patient, and deliberate; while the advantaged perceived themselves as happy, self-confident, trusting, fearless, and worthy. Despite differences, both groups had higher percentages of responses in the positive end of the continuum, indicating that disadvantaged children do not necessarily reveal negative personality traits in their self-perceptions. Data also indicated that these differences did not necessarily mean that one group had negative personality traits and the other had positive personality traits. (DO)

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SELF-IMAGES OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

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Introduction

This paper is the result of research which was conducted as a phase of a larger project under a federal grant. We were concerned with the following questions in this investigation:

(1) Do Disadvantaged and Advantaged children have positive or negative personality traits as indicated by their self-perceptions?

(2) What differences are there in personality traits between the Disadvantaged and Advantaged children as indicated by their self-perceptions?

(3) What differences are there in personality traits between the Disadvantaged and Advantaged boys as indicated by their self-perception?

(4) What differences are there in personality traits between the Disadvantaged and Advantaged girls as indicated by their self-perceptions?

(5) What differences are there in personality traits between the Disadvantaged and Advantaged children when grouped according to grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8?

These questions resulted from previous research which we had done and which is scheduled to be published in the current issue of the AER Journal. Let us first review the results of that research and then lead to the particular study at hand.

The earlier research was basically concerned with the self-images of Disadvantaged children in the middle and upper grades of elementary school.

The five grade levels involved (four through eight) are crucial in helping the child to develop a positive self concept in regard to his ability to achieve some measure of success in the classroom.

Self-perceptions comprise an important area for educational study for how a student looks at himself often has an effect upon how he looks at school and how he performs in the classroom (Spiegler, 1967). These self-perceptions include the self concept (how the individual believes himself to be at the moment), the ideal concept (how he wishes he were or hopes to become), and the various reflected selves (how he believes others view him). The research was concerned with a comparison of the self-perceptions of Disadvantaged children with those of children who are not generally described as disadvantaged. The researchers investigated five self-perception measures--the views each student stated about himself (self concept), how he says he would like to be (ideal self), and how he thinks other people look at him (reflected self--his classmates, his teacher, and his parents).

More specifically, the following questions were raised concerning these self-perceptions:

(1) Do Disadvantaged and Advantaged children have positive or negative self-perceptions?

(2) Are Disadvantaged children different from Advantaged children in their self-perceptions?

(3) Are there differences between the self-perception scores of Disadvantaged and Advantaged children when they are grouped according to grade, sex, or any combination of sex and grade?

After the data were collected, they were statistically treated by an analysis of variance design. Certain aspects of the data stood out when a comparison was made of the total picture. For all five self-perception scores, the Disadvantaged children had consistently higher means than the Advantaged children, with significance resulting on four of the five measures (excepting the Reflected Self-Classmates). In regard to the degree of variability, only on the Ideal Concept measure did the Disadvantaged children indicate less dispersion than the Advantaged children. For both schools, greater variation was shown on the three Reflected Self measures than the Self Concept or Ideal Concept.

On none of the five measures were sex differences indicated except in interaction with school or grade. Only one of the five self-perception scores revealed grade differences (Reflected Self-Parent), though there were more differences when grade was combined with sex or school.

The school and sex combination produced significance on three of the measures (Self Concept, Reflected Self-Parent, and Reflected Self-Classmates). The school and grade interaction was also significant for three sets of scores (Self Concept, Reflected Self-Classmates, and Reflected Self-Teacher), and in all cases the significance was at the .01 level. The .01 level of significance was also true for the interaction of sex and grade on the Reflected Self-Parent scores.

Because significant results occurred on all five measures for the interaction of the three factors--i.e., school, sex, and grade--and in only one case was this not at the .01 level of significance (Ideal Concept), it might be well to examine more closely the smallest units of the design. An inspection of the results revealed a tendency toward lower mean scores for

the boys as they progress from grade four to grade eight but toward somewhat higher mean scores for the girls as they progress through the grades. Significant differences were found between the boys in the two schools in the upper grades. Just the reverse was true for the girls. The significant differences between the two groups of girls occurred in the lower grades. For both sexes, the Disadvantaged children generally indicated higher means than the Advantaged children--with this being true for the boys in 20 of the 25 pairs of means, and 14 out of 25 for the girls. The standard deviations were also generally bigger for the Disadvantaged boys and girls over the advantaged--indicating greater dispersion in 17 of the 25 pairs for the boys and 15 out of the 25 for the girls.

Since the results indicated difference in self-perceptions of disadvantaged and advantaged children, it was decided to investigate whether differences in personality traits existed and what these differences might be as revealed by their self-perceptions.

Procedure

In the present investigation of differences in personality traits, over 500 subjects from an urban school system were used--229 from a public elementary school in a disadvantaged area and 295 from a public elementary school in an advantaged area of the same city; 244 girls and 270 boys; grades four through eight, with a minimum of 40 students from each grade. Both groups of children live in segregated areas of the community and attend neighborhood schools. The Disadvantaged children typically live in low-rent tenements or subsidized housing. The ethnic composition is about two-thirds Negro and Puerto Rican, and one-third White. The family income is less than $4,000, and many families receive State aid or welfare funds. Some children receive free breakfast every morning at their school through a federally

sponsored project, and the Headstart Program has been in operation.

In contrast, the children who are not disadvantaged are generally from a middle class neighborhood in the city. There is usually at least one adult working in a steady job or profession with an income of over $7,000. The members of the family tend to live in one-family homes which they themselves own. The ethnic make-up is about 90 percent White and 10 percent minority groups. These more advantaged youngsters are not unlike middle class children in the suburbs, but there are few suburban counterparts for the Disadvantaged children living in the city.

These students (herein designated Ss_{dis} for the Disadvantaged children and Ss_{adv} for the Advantaged children) were asked to indicate their self concepts by an inventory which is a variant of a measuring device used by the authors in previous research (Soares & Soares, 1964, 1965, 1966). Forty bi-polar traits are expressed in sentence form--each pair separated by four spaces of distance, whereby the subject rates himself according to whether he is "very" or "more" like the positive than the negative trait, or vice versa.

Example:

I am a happy	_____:	_____:	_____:	_____	I am not a happy
person	very happy	more happy than unhappy	more unhappy than happy	very unhappy	person.

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Results

The raw data were treated statistically by the Chi-square technique, and percentages of positive and negative responses computed, and these results are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The percentages were computed for each of the four categories of the continum--for the "very" and "more" categories on the positive side and also for the "very" and "more" categorie

on the negative side. Though the percentages for all four categories were calculated, only the sub-totals for the positive and negative ends are presented.

The results in Tables 1 and 2 reveal significant Chi-squares, when the two groups are compared, for the traits: happy--unhappy; competent--incompetent; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; self-confident--insecure; trusting--suspicious; fearless--fearful. For Ss_{dis} and Ss_{adv} boys, significant results are indicated for: adaptable--rigid; competent--incompetent; relaxed--nervous; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; kind--unkind. Chi-square results for both groups of girls are significant on these traits: happy--unhappy; deliberate--impulsive; independent--dependent; self-confident--insecure; and fearless--fearful.

In looking at the students when grouped by grades, significant Chi-squares were found as follows:

Grade 4 - assertive--submissive; considerate--selfish; competent--incompetent; relaxed--nervous; trusting--suspicious.

Grade 5 - happy--unhappy; deliberate--impulsive; independent--dependent; self-confident--insecure; trusting--suspicious; worthy--unworthy.

Grade 6 - competent--incompetent; friendly--unfriendly; trusting--suspicious.

Grade 7 - happy--unhappy; adaptable--rigid; competent--incompetent; deliberate--impulsive; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; fearless--fearful; cooperative--uncooperative.

Grade 8 - happy--unhappy; adaptable--rigid; relaxed--nervous; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; self-confident--insecure; worthy--unworthy.

The traits most often found to be significant were: happy--unhappy; competent--incompetent; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; self-confident--insecure; and trusting--suspicious.

In examining the percentages in Table 1, one can see the higher percentage of Ss_{dis} than Ss_{adv} on the positive end of the continuum for twelve of the traits, with the largest difference for the following: adaptable--rigid; competent--incompetent; independent--dependent; and patient--impatient. For the Ss_{adv} some of the more positive responses occurred on these traits: happy--unhappy; trusting--suspicious; fearless--fearful; and worthy--unworthy. Not indicated in Tables 1 and 2 as presented is the result that the Ss_{dis} had a higher percentage of responses for the "very" category at the extreme positive end of the continuum than the Ss_{adv}--even in some instances when the Ss_{adv} had a higher percentage total for the two positive categories combined. This was also true for the Disadvantaged when compared with the Advantaged on a sex and grade basis.

The Ss_{dis} boys had a higher percentage of positive responses for twelve of the traits investigated, with the greater differences for the traits of: adaptable--rigid; competent--incompetent; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; kind--unkind; and cooperative--uncooperative. The Ss_{dis} boys tended to rate the extreme positive end (the "very" category) of the continuum more than the Ss_{adv} boys.

In contrast to the total of 12 for the Ss_{dis} boys, the Ss_{dis} girls had a higher percentage for nine of the traits. As did the Ss_{dis} boys, the Ss_{dis} girls also tended to mark the extreme positive end of the continuum for more traits did the Ss_{adv} girls. Some examples are: happy--unhappy; deliberate--impulsive; independent--dependent; and self-confident--insecure. The Ss_{dis} girls responded to a greater extent on the positive end with some of the traits--e.g., adaptable--rigid; assertive--submissive; considerate--selfish; competent--incompetent; independent--dependent. Some of the traits to which

the Ss_{adv} girls gave more positive responses were: happy--unhappy; relaxed--nervous; self-confident--insecure; tough--sensitive; trusting--suspicious; fearless--fearful; worthy--unworthy.

The resulting percentages for the students in Grades 4-8 revealed that, when grouped according to grade, the Ss_{dis} tended to mark the extreme positive end of the continuum more often than the Ss_{adv}. Some of the more prominent percentages are as follows:

Grade 4 (Ss_{dis}) - competent--incompetent; relaxed--nervous; deliberate--impulsive; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; friendly--unfriendly; trusting--suspicious; fearless--fearful.

Grade 4 (Ss_{adv}) - happy--unhappy; considerate--selfish; tough--sensitive; satisfied--self-pitying.

Grade 5 (Ss_{dis}) - adaptable--rigid; deliberate--impulsive; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; friendly--unfriendly; tough--sensitive; kind--unkind; cooperative--uncooperative.

Grade 5 (Ss_{adv}) - happy--unhappy; self-confident--insecure; trusting--suspicious; worthy--unworthy.

Grade 6 (Ss_{dis}) - adaptable--rigid; competent--incompetent; deliberate--impulsive; independent--dependent; masculine--feminine; worthy--unworthy.

Grade 6 (Ss_{adv}) - happy--unhappy; assertive--submissive; relaxed--nervous; tolerant--intolerant; tough--sensitive; trusting--suspicious.

Grade 7 (Ss_{dis}) - adaptable--rigid; considerate--selfish; competent--incompetent; independent--dependent; patient--impatient; self-confident--insecure; tough--sensitive.

Grade 7 (Ss_{adv}) - relaxed--nervous; masculine--feminine; fearless--fearful; worthy--unworthy.

Grade 8 (Ss_{dis}) - assertive--submissive; considerate--selfish; independent--dependent masculine--feminine; patient--impatient.

Grade 8 (Ss_{adv}) - happy--unhappy; relaxed--nervous; deliberate--impulsive; friendly--unfriendly; tough--sensitive; satisfied--self-pitying.

Summary of the Results

In summary, the results do show higher percentages on the positive personality traits for the Ss_{dis} than the Ss_{adv}. The data also reveal

greater differences between Ss_{dis} and Ss_{adv} boys than between Ss_{dis} and Ss_{adv} girls. Some of the traits where larger differences existed are: the Ss_{dis} more than the Ss_{adv} tended to see themselves as independent, adaptable, competent, patient, and deliberate; while the Ss_{adv} more than the Ss_{dis} perceived themselves as being happy, self-confident, trusting, fearless, and worthy individuals.

Among the boys, the Ss_{dis} more than the Ss_{adv} perceived themselves as being adaptable, competent, relaxed, independent, and patient; while the Ss_{adv} boys were higher in tolerant, trusting, satisfied, and worthy.

Examples of differences between the two groups of girls are: Ss_{dis} girls higher in adaptable, assertive, competent, and independent; Ss_{adv} girls higher in happy, relaxed, self-confident, trusting, and worthy.

On the basis of grades, the Ss_{dis} had more positive responses as follows: Grade 4 Ss_{dis} saw themselves as competent, relaxed, independent, patient, friendly; Grade 4 Ss_{adv}, happy, considerate, satisfied. Grade 5 Ss_{dis} indicated self concepts as adaptable, deliberate, independent, patient, and tough; while the Grade 5 Ss_{adv} were happy, trusting, fearless, and worthy. For Grade 6 Ss_{dis} some of the traits were adaptable, competent, deliberate, independent; for Grade 6 Ss_{adv}, happy, assertive, tolerant, trusting. The traits responded to more positively by Ss_{dis} 7th graders were adaptable, competent, independent, patient, self-confident; Grade 7 Ss_{adv}, relaxed, fearless, worthy. For the SS_{dis} 8th graders, perceptions of self were adaptable, assertive, considerate, independent, patient; for the Grade 8 Ss_{adv}, their perceptions were happy, relaxed, deliberate, friendly, satisfied.

Some of the traits consistently found in the self-perceptions of the Ss_{dis} were adaptable, competent, independent, patient, deliberate; and for

the Ss_{adv}, there were happy, self-confident, satisfied, trusting, worthy.

Discussion

Thus, the results indicate some differences in personality traits between Disadvantaged and Advantaged students in grades four through eight. Even though these differences exist, both groups had higher percentages of responses in the positive end of the continuum for the traits--indicating that Disadvantaged children do not necessarily reveal negative personality traits in their self-perceptions. The data also indicate that these differences are not necessarily based on differences between one group having negative personality traits and the other having positive personality traits.

In conclusion it is most interesting to note that, not only did the Disadvantaged group indicate positive self-perceptions and personality traits, it also had higher self-perceptions and in more instances viewed the self as having higher positive personality traits than the Advantaged group. These results are readily understood when one notes that all the children involved attend neighborhood schools. In other words, disadvantaged children are exposed only to other disadvantaged people in school as well as at home and in their neighborhoods. As a corollary, the Coleman Report (1966) postulated that, when Negro pupils became part of an integrated school system, their self concepts diminished. Meanwhile, advantaged children associate only with other advantaged persons in school and at home. The ensuing associations and challenges for the disadvantaged have an effect upon the level of aspiration they hold for themselves and which others have of them. Since they are functioning according to expectations by teachers and parents, they are satisfied with themselves--hence, a positive self concept and reflected self, and personality traits.

On the other hand, the advantaged child may be more pressured than he

should be by his parents and other adults. If he does not measure up to their expectations, the result may be lower self-esteem and lower (even though positive) self-perceptions.

In the final analysis, of course, both disadvantaged and advantaged children in elementary school indicate positive self-perceptions and personality traits, which are neither overly high nor unduly low. Therefore, despite their cultural handicap, disadvantaged children do not necessarily suffer from lower self-esteem and a lower sense of personal worth. It may well be that the common denominator is effective and realistic teaching. The challenge, then, is to help the disadvantaged students maintain their positive self-images and yet function at a more realistic and higher level of aspiration, with neither dropping out of school nor yielding to the pressures of the high school.

Continuing research needs to be done for a comparative analysis with other sized cities, with city and suburban communities, with segregated and integrated school systems, and with elementary and secondary levels (which is now under investigation), in order to dimensionalize still further the scope of self-perceptions and self-images of disadvantaged children.

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(A complete list of references can be found in the current issue of the AER Journal. Research completed up to this time indicates lower self-perceptions for disadvantaged high school students compared to disadvantaged elementary school students.)

Soares & Soares

A Comparative Study of the Self-Images of Disadvantaged Children

Table 1

Personality Traits of Advantaged and Disadvantaged Students

Traits	Group # Adv. Ss	Dis. Ss	Adv. Boys	Dis. Boys	Adv. Girls	Dis. Girls
Happy--unhappy	88.4	84.4**	86.1	86.0	90.7	82.5*
Adaptable--rigid	74.5	82.9	73.0	85.9*	76.0	80.4
Assertive--submissive	89.1	89.2	93.0	90.3	85.1	87.9
Considerate--selfish	88.7	89.7	86.9	86.8	90.8	93.4
Competent--incompetent	68.5	77.1**	59.2	74.5**	78.1	80.4
Relaxed--nervous	68.2	65.4	71.0	74.9*	65.4	57.5
Deliberate--impulsive	81.1	85.9	77.8	86.9	84.4	87.7*
Independent--dependent	76.6	92.7**	79.3	92.9**	73.8	92.3**
Masculine--feminine	59.1	61.1	96.5	95.6	21.0	18.4
Patient--impatient	78.1	84.8*	73.6	86.7*	81.9	82.5
Self-confident--insecure	78.3	73.2*	72.4	76.3	78.0	69.5*
Friendly--unfriendly	85.0	87.4	80.6	85.9	89.7	89.0
Tolerant--intolerant	87.8	85.7	88.3	85.0	87.7	85.8
Tough--sensitive	64.5	66.9	66.9	76.2	62.3	55.4
Trusting--suspicious	83.5	77.6*	82.0	79.8	85.7	74.9
Satisfied--self-pitying	88.4	85.3	86.2	83.2	90.8	87.9
Kind--unkind	89.5	93.6	85.5	92.0*	93.7	95.6
Fearless--fearful	77.6	71.3*	81.4	83.2	73.8	56.5**
Cooperative--uncooperative	91.4	94.6	85.6	92.0	96.5	97.7
Worthy--unworthy	92.6	86.8	90.6	88.5	93.6	85.8

N = 514

Values expressed in percentages

*Significant Chi-square = 7.82; $p < .05$

**Significant Chi-square = 11.34; $p < .01$

Table 2

Personality Traits of Advantaged and Disadvantaged Students in Grades Four through Eight

Traits	Group # Adv. 4	Dis. 4	Adv. 5	Dis. 5	Adv. 6	Dis. 6	Adv. 7	Dis. 7	Adv. 8	Dis. 8
Happy--unhappy	87.9	80.0	87.9	80.8*	83.2	80.4	86.0	89.6*	98.0	90.6*
Adaptable--rigid	81.3	80.0	77.5	85.0	68.4	75.5	70.0	94.0**	72.0	76.6*
Assertive--submissive	88.8	84.0*	93.0	91.3	94.4	85.3	88.0	92.0	84.0	90.6
Considerate--selfish	90.6	72.0**	91.3	91.3	92.5	90.2	82.0	92.0	86.0	95.2
Competent--incompetent	62.6	68.0*	77.5	76.5	66.6	87.7*	72.0	82.0*	66.0	67.3
Relaxed--nervous	65.3	80.0**	65.4	68.0	73.9	68.2	72.0	60.0	66.0	53.0*
Deliberate--impulsive	87.9	96.0	75.7	97.8*	81.4	92.6	74.0	74.0	88.0	74.3
Independent--dependent	81.3	100.0	70.6	95.6*	72.1	87.7	76.0	84.0*	82.0	95.2**
Masculine--feminine	62.6	60.0	65.5	63.7	49.9	63.3	74.0	56.0	52.0	62.7
Patient--impatient	89.2	100.0	86.2	95.7	75.8	70.6	66.0	78.0*	64.0	86.0*
Self-confident--insecure	78.6	76.0	84.4	70.2*	75.8	73.0	68.0	82.0	68.0	65.1**
Friendly--unfriendly	77.3	84.0	82.6	91.4	86.9	89.7*	94.0	92.0	88.0	79.0
Tolerant--intolerant	89.3	92.0	91.3	89.3	92.5	82.9	84.0	82.0	80.0	83.6
Tough--sensitive	64.0	58.0	60.2	72.2	68.4	56.0	56.0	76.0	74.0	60.4
Trusting--suspicious	84.0	92.0*	89.5	70.1*	77.7	63.4**	84.0	84.0	82.0	83.7
Satisfied--self-pitying	83.9	76.0	87.8	85.0	94.3	90.2	84.0	86.0	94.0	86.0
Kind--unkind	86.6	92.0	87.8	97.7	88.8	90.1	90.0	92.0	96.0	95.2
Fearless--fearful	73.3	92.0	77.5	57.3	75.9	75.5	90.0	72.0*	74.0	69.7
Cooperative--uncooperative	94.6	100.0	82.6	93.5	88.8	87.7	95.0	98.0*	92.0	97.6
Worthy--unworthy	93.2	92.0	94.7	70.1*	90.7	97.5	92.0	84.0	88.0	97.5*

N = 514

#Values expressed in percentages

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